



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

VALERIE ERVIN
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 5

March 20, 2013

School Board President Christopher Barclay
Montgomery County Public Schools
850 Hungerford Drive, Room 123
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Chris,

As you know, the Council and the Board of Education have recently received and approved a number of appropriation requests for school improvement projects that are funded by private contributions rather than by public funds. All members from both elected bodies value and celebrate the strong and energized school communities in Montgomery County that contribute their own personal resources to benefit their neighborhood schools.

The Education Committee is concerned, however, that private contributions may lead to or exacerbate inequities among our communities and our schools. When the Board took up this issue in 2001-2002, leading to the current policy CNE, *Facility Improvements That Are Not Funded with Montgomery County Revenues*, equity issues were a central concern in the discussion. Now that we have over a decade of experience implementing this policy, it is important to evaluate whether the intent of the policy has kept pace with the rapidly changing socio-economic environment of Montgomery County.

Similar issues arise with private funding for school based activities, programs, or purchases that do not rise to the level of capital improvements guided by Policy CNE. While these activities are addressed through Board policy CND, *School-Related Fund-Raising*, our schools experience a wide range of community involvement and contribution, and a corresponding range of privately supported program enhancements.

We would like to understand the Board of Education's current thinking on how these policies do or do not prevent inequities among schools, or whether the Board has plans to revise the policies. As partners in supporting educational resources for our teachers and students, I invite you and your colleagues to engage in an open discussion with the Education Committee to explore how we can continue to encourage and support

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parent and community involvement without undermining the principle of equality that is the backbone of public education.

As context, please provide written responses to the attached information request along with your response of the Board's perspective on the equity issues raised by the policies and practices associated with private contributions to schools. We plan to schedule an Education Committee discussion with you and other Board members once this information is available. We look forward to productive dialogue with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Valerie Ervin
Councilmember



Phil Andrews
Councilmember



Craig Rise
Councilmember

Information Request:
Private Contributions to School Based Improvements or Activities

I. Policy CNE, *Facility Improvements That Are Not Funded with Montgomery County Revenues*

1. For each year since 2003, please provide:
 - The number of requests for privately funded facility improvements MCPS has received;
 - The number approved and disapproved; and
 - A list of projects approved and disapproved.
2. Please provide an overview of the application and review procedures, including project evaluation criteria.

II. Policy CND, *School-Related Fund-Raising*

1. Please provide an overview of the processes by which community funded school based programs, activities, or purchases are reviewed and approved.
2. The policy contains only one specifically excluded purpose for private funding, “to employ anyone to work in the schools in the regular day”. Are there other types of purposes that are excluded by policy or practice? Please provide examples of proposals or requests that have been approved and disapproved.